



News



SWOSU Student Consultant Projects Lead to Business Innovations in Oklahoma

Photo Caption: SWOSU student Kevin Baker (left) of Cordell discusses his Retail Management Consulting recommendations with Michael McKinney, store manager at the Family Dollar in Weatherford.

The newly implemented Southwestern Oklahoma State University Student Retail Consultancy program in Weatherford resulted in value-added opportunities for Oklahoma businesses and real-world experiences for students' resumes.

According to SWOSU Assistant Professor Dr. Amanda Evert, each student in the online course was encouraged to find a business partner who was interested in collaborating with a student retail management consultant.

The students worked on projects focused on a variety of areas related to retail management including environmental sustainability, social media promotional strategies, human resource management proposals, new product development, customer loyalty offers and corporate social responsibility programming.

The program is part of the Department of Business & Computer Science in the Everett Dobson School of Business & Technology.

“We had 29 marketing, management, organizational leadership and communications students enroll in this online retail management class,” said Evert, developer of the student consultancy program. “The students developed their consulting reports based on the course concepts that they read about in their textbooks and external research they found in peer-reviewed research journals, top business publications and industry association reports.”

Evert said the final assignments of the course involved the students reporting feedback from clients as well as developing resume lines describing the project.

The business partners represented western Oklahoma leaders in healthcare, food service, apparel, security services, beauty, agriculture and manufacturing. At the end of the project, each business partner received a four-page consulting report, which included a possible business opportunity suggestion supported by industry research.

“I did a sustainability plan for a restaurant,” SWOSU marketing student Desarae Anderson of Comanche said. “At first I was a little nervous, but it actually ended up being amazing. Sustainability is something I am very passionate about, and this is what I would like to do for a career.”

The students assisted the business owners in the early stages of implementing the suggested course of action.

According to organizational leadership student Teresa Anderson of Altus, the main thing she learned was how vitally important it is to listen to your client.

“They know their business strengths and weaknesses and know what areas they need to focus on,” Anderson said. “After jointly selecting the target area, you can then narrow your research so you can make valid recommendations to benefit their business.”

Communications student Kierra Prewitt of Cordell said she enjoyed working on a retail consultant project, and it gave her a real world view on what to expect. Having the ability to choose what industry she wanted to focus on for the project allowed her the freedom to use her creativity.

Students worked on a wide range of deliverables, which included developing social media accounts, creating websites, planning YouTube videos, designing promotional materials as well as reorganizing work schedules, developing customer loyalty proposals and prototyping new products.

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